

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-2 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 1 and 3-4 have been amended. No new matter is added

Claims 1-4 are pending in the application.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-2 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,447,071 to Griffin. The Examiner states that Griffin discloses all of the features of the claims. Applicants respectfully travers.

Claim 1 has now been amended to recite “forming a welding heat confining annular region surrounded by the inside groove wall of the annular joining groove, the bottom surface of the annular joining groove and the inside slope peripheral surface of the peripheral joining end.” Support for this amendment may be found, for example, in paragraph [0031] of the Specification. It is respectfully submitted that Griffin does not disclose a welding heat confining annular region surrounded by the inside groove wall of the annular joining groove, the bottom surface of the annular joining groove and the inside slope peripheral surface of the peripheral joining end, as now recited in claim 1. In contrast, Griffin describes that the outboard end 52 has first and second surfaces 62, 64 that are complementary to the shape of the groove, such that the outboard end 52 is slip fit in the groove. *See*, Griffin, column 3, lines 22-27 and column 4, lines 7-11.

Further, claim 1 has also now been amended to recite “welding the annular joining groove to an edge of the peripheral joining end, so that the wheel disk and the wheel rim are joined.” Support for this amendment may be found, for example, in paragraph [0034] of the Specification. It is respectfully submitted that Griffin does not disclose welding the annular joining groove to an edge

of the peripheral joining end, as now recited in claim 1. In contrast, Griffin discloses that wheel rim can be welded to the wheel disc with an outside diameter weld or an inside diameter weld, but does not disclose that the weld can be between a joining end and the groove.

As described in paragraph [0034] of the Specification, by forming recited welding heat confining annular region the inside slope peripheral surface of the peripheral joining end is melted so as to weld the peripheral joining end and the annular joining groove. With the described method a full face vehicle wheel of improved durability is produced.

Because Griffin does not teach or suggest the features of amended claim 1, as discussed above, that reference cannot anticipate claim 1 or its dependent claims 2 and 4. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Griffin in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,417,476 to Hasegawa. The Examiner states that Griffin discloses most of the features of claim 3 but admits that Griffin does not teach bending the opening brim where the peripheral joining end is formed toward the inside of the wheel rim. The Examiner contends that Hasegawa teaches this feature and that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Griffin to include this feature of Hasegawa. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 3 depends from claim 1, which has now been amended as discussed above. Hasegawa does not teach or suggest the feature of claim 1 that is missing from Griffin. Accordingly, any combination of Griffin and Hasegawa would not render obvious claim 1. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over Griffin and Hasegawa. Moreover, claim 3 is patentable over Griffin and Hasegawa for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.


CONCLUSION

Each and every point raised in the Office Action dated March 25, 2008 has been addressed on the basis of the above remarks. In view of the foregoing it is believed that claims 1-4 are in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue. A prompt and favorable action in that regard is earnestly solicited.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
Louis J. DelJuidice

Registration No.: 47,522
DARBY & DARBY P.C.
P.O. Box 770
Church Street Station
New York, New York 10008-0770
(212) 527-7700
(212) 527-7701 (Fax)
Attorneys/Agents For Applicant